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## **Project ERIN and the Response of European Composers to Thomas Moore's Lalla Rookh**

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# Lalla Rookh

## Sections

- [The story of Lalla Rookh, illustrated](#)
  - [The Songs](#)
  - [Concert Music](#)
  - [Theatre Music](#)
- *Lalla Rookh* is an epic tale told in a mixture of prose and poetry. The title-character, a Moghul princess, journeys to her betrothed's empire in Bucharria in the company of her father's Vice-Chamberlain and a Bucharrian poet. The latter tells her four poetic tales during the journey, revealing himself as her destined spouse at its end. This story spawned dozens of songs and several substantial concert or theatrical works during the nineteenth century.

# The Story of Lalla Rookh, Illustrated

## Sections

- Lalla Rookh and Feramorz
  - The Veiled Prophet
  - Paradise and the Peri
  - The Fireworshippers
  - The Light of the Harem
- Moore's tale inspired numerous illustrated editions throughout the nineteenth century, either of the whole story or a part thereof.
  - We have presented each of Feramorz's poetic tales as a section, while the love story of Lalla Rookh and her poet – which is an over-arching prose narrative in which these poems is found – is treated as a separate section.



# Paradise and the Peri

## Sections

- Covers and title-pages
  - The Peri denied
  - The first mission
  - The second mission
  - The third mission
  - Paradise regained
- Feramorz's second tale for Lalla Rookh was 'The Paradise and the Peri'. Moore's Peri, a Persian angel, has been denied entry into Paradise due to an undisclosed sin. These illustrations trace her three missions to Earth to try to find the 'perfect gift' that will readmit her.
  - We also include a number of book covers and title-pages that demonstrate the vogue for oriental art during the nineteenth century.

# The Peri denied

## Sections

- Owen Jones et al
- Kenneth Jones
- John Tenniel

- Moore's poetic tale opens thus:  
'One morn a Peri at the gate / Of Eden stood disconsolate; / And as she listen'd to the Springs / Of Life within, like music flowing, / And caught the light upon her wings / Through the half-open portal glowing, / She wept to think her recreant race / Should e'er have lost that glorious place!'. Artists have responded to the Peri's predicament differently: Owen Jones presents the moment of conflict between the Angel and the Peri, while Kenneth Jones focuses on the emotion of the Peri alone.

# The Peri denied: Owen Jones et al



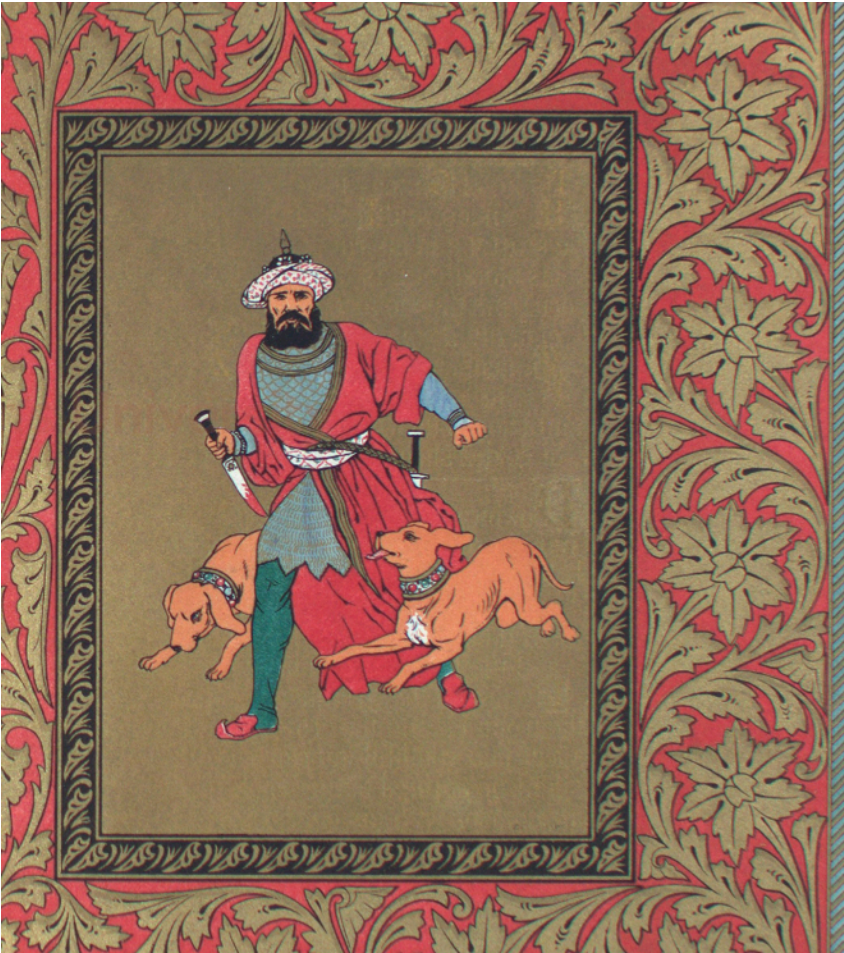
- ‘The glorious Angel, who was keeping / The gates of Light, beheld her weeping / ... / “Nymph of a fair but erring line!” / ... “One hope is thine./ *‘Tis written in the Book of Fate, / The Peri yet may be forgiven / Who brings to this Eternal gate / The Gift that is most dear to Heaven!*” Thos. Moore

# The first mission

## Sections

- Peri descending
  - Tyrant of Gazna
  - Peri with fallen hero
  - Peri's return to Paradise
- Charged with the quest that will redeem her, but obliged to identify the gift herself, the Peri descends to earth. She recalls a region of India 'crimson now her rivers ran / With human blood' due to the invasion of a wrathful tyrant. She resolves to seek her gift there.

# The Tyrant of Gazna



Moore's research discovered a Mahmood of Gazna who conquered India in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. He was famed for his 400 bejeweled hounds. Lithographer Owen Jones depicts Moore's advancing tyrant, "fierce in wrath /... /His bloodhounds he adorns with gems, / Torn from the violated necks / Of many a young and lov'd Sultana'.



# Peri with fallen hero



- The Peri notes a youthful warrior, who falls in direct battle with the tyrant. In Moore's words, 'Swiftly descending on a ray / Of morning light, she caught the last - / Last glorious drop his heart had shed, / Before its free-born spirit fled!'

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# The second mission

## Sections

- [The Plague](#)
  - [The sacrifice](#)
  - [Peri with the Lovers](#)
  - [Return to Paradise](#)
- The Peri's second quest sees her travel to Egypt, which was suffering from a severe infestation of the plague. She witnesses a touching scene between two young lovers – the young woman voluntarily catching the plague from her lover so she can join him in death. The Peri hopes a relic from that scene – the last sigh of the dying woman – will gain her entrance to Paradise.



# The Plague



- Lithographer Owen Jones is unique in depicting the cause of suffering behind the Peri's second quest, rendering Moore's 'Demon of the Plague [who] cast / From his hot wing a deadlier blast, / More mortal far than ever came, / From the red Desert's sands of flame!'

# The sacrifice

- A young maiden has discovered her lover hiding to spare her catching the plague. She reassures him that her place is by his side, addressing him in Moore's words "Then turn to me, my own love, turn, / Before, like thee, I fade and burn; / Cling to these yet cool lips, and share / The last pure life that lingers there!"





# Peri and the Lovers



Owen Jones



John Tenniel

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- The Songs
- Concert Music
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- *Lalla Rookh* is an epic tale told in a mixture of prose and poetry. The title-character, a Moghul princess, journeys to her betrothed's empire in Bucharria in the company of her father's Vice-Chamberlain and a Bucharrian poet. This latter tells her four poetic tales during the journey, revealing himself as her destined spouse at its end. This story spawned around 20 songs and also several substantial concert or theatre pieces throughout the 19th century.

# Lalla Rookh, The Songs

## **Sections**

- Individual Composers
- Particular Song Texts

- Some 20 excerpts from Lalla Rookh were set as songs by Europe's composers during the nineteenth century. Some of these were actual songs within Moore's text; in other cases the composer selected an inspiring passage of poetry to set. The story of the songs can be traced through the efforts of individual composers, or by the journeys of individual song texts.

# Lalla Rookh, the songs

## Sections

- Araby's daughter
  - A spirit there is
  - Bendermeer's Stream
  - Her hands were clasp'd
  - Tell me not of joys above
  - 'Twas his own voice
- Some 20 excerpts from Lalla Rookh were set as songs by Europe's composers during the nineteenth century. Some of these were actual songs within Moore's text; in other cases the composer selected an inspiring passage of poetry to set. Some texts were set by more than one composer; some settings enjoyed a transatlantic transmission.



# Particular songs, Bendermeer's stream



- 'Bendermeer's Stream', from 'The Veiled Prophet', is a nostalgic lyric sung by the concubine Zelica to fulfil the prophet's demands that she seduce her former lover Azim. This individual lyric was set by more composers than any other from *Lalla Rookh*, with James Power of London publishing settings by Lord Burghersh, William Hawes, and Lady Flint shortly after Moore's poem came out. A later setting, by Edward Bunnett, was published in 1865. American settings (as 'Bower of roses') include J. Wilson (New York, 1817), as well as R.W. Wyatt and S. Wetherbee (Boston, 1820). The song also appears in Charles Villiers Stanford's opera, *The Veiled Prophet* (Hannover, 1881; London, 1893 as *Il profeta valetto*).



# Particular songs, A spirit there is



- “A spirit there is,” an ode to the pleasures of love, is taken from the first poetic tale, ‘The Veiled Prophet’. It is sung by a chorus of girls in the prophet’s harem and is overheard by the wandering hero Azim. It was set twice, by the Danish composer George Gerson (London, 1821) and also by Henry Théodore Pontet (London, 1879).

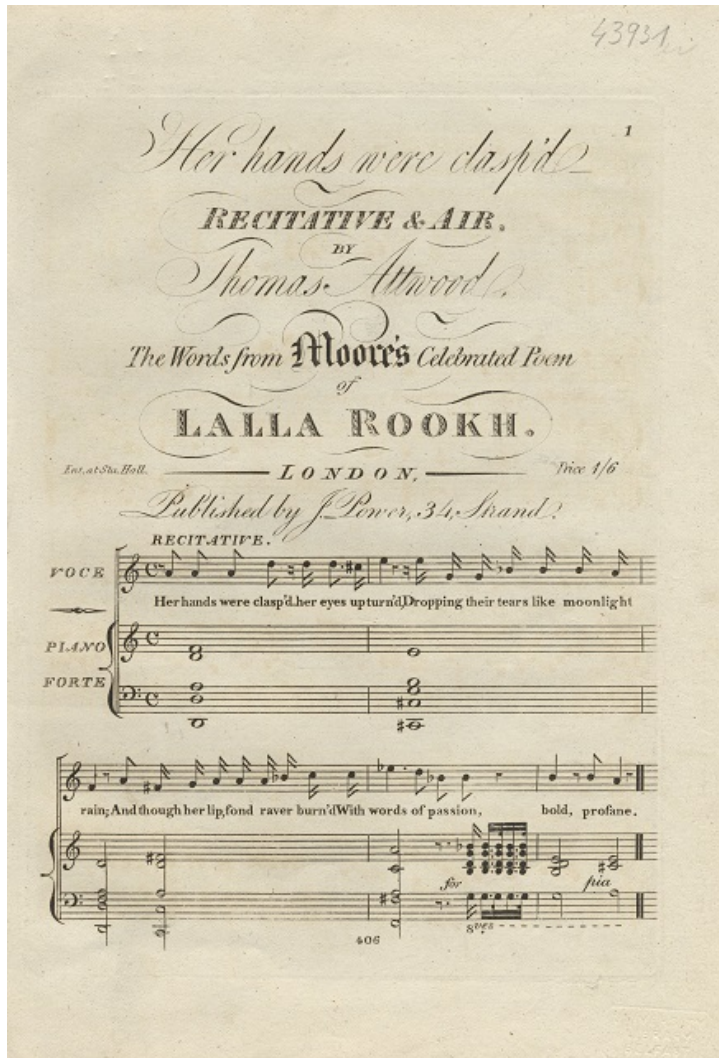
# Particular songs, Tell me not of joys above



- As Lalla Rookh's bridal procession approaches Lahore, she realizes the strength of her feelings for the poet Feramorz. Fearing a loss of honour before she is wed, she banishes the poet from her retinue. After experiencing the pageants put on by the Lahorian court, she continues her journey – and is serenaded by a familiar voice amongst the trees: "Tell me not of joys above, / If that world can give no bliss, / Truer, happier than the Love / Which enslaves our souls in this." This song from the story was set by Danish composer and banker George Gerson and is now available in a modern edition on IMSLP.

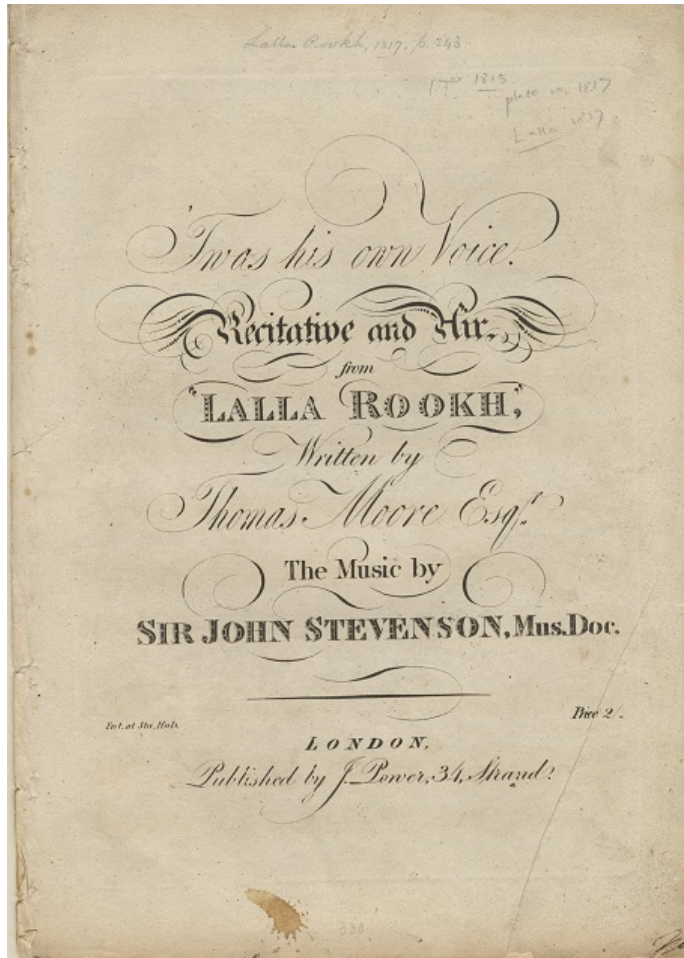


# Particular songs, Her hands were clasp'd



- Within 'The Fireworshippers', the Arabian princess Hinda sets forth in a bark to warn her Gheber lover of her father's plot to annihilate his tribe of native Persians. Hinda declares her true love to Allah, after which Moore's poem reverts to the third person: 'Her hands were clasp'd – her eyes upturn'd, /Dropping their tears like moonlight rain', continuing with lines that praised the purity of Hinda's spirit. This particular portion of Moore's poem was set as a recitative-air sequence by British composer Thomas Attwood and published by James Power circa 1818.

# Particular songs, 'Twas his own voice



- In 'The Fireworshippers', Hinda sets off in her bark to warn her Gheber lover of the danger her father's army poses. She is captured by a ship of Gheber warriors, and blindfolded. Her terror turns to ecstatic relief when she hears the voice of her beloved, and Moore conveys her thoughts thus: "Twas his own voice- she could not err- Throughout the breathing world's extent / There was *one* such voice for her, / So kind so soft, so eloquent!" Moore's regular musical collaborator Sir John Stevenson set this text in a recitative-air sequence that was published by James Power in London and by Blake in Philadelphia.

# Particular songs, Araby's daughter

## ARABY'S DAUGHTER.

Words by Thomas Moore, Esq. Symphonized & accomp. by G. Kiallmark

VOCE. *SO AVE.*

PIANO. *mf*

FORTE.

Fare-well— fare-well— to thee,

*pp* *sf* *smorz* *q tempo*

A-RABY'S daughter! (Thus war-bled a PE-RI beneath the dark sea) No

620

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Araby's Daughter'. It includes a vocal line (VOCE.) and piano accompaniment (PIANO. and FORTE.). The piano part has markings for 'mf', 'pp', 'sf', 'smorz', and 'q tempo'. The lyrics are written below the piano part, including 'Fare-well— fare-well— to thee,' and 'A-RABY'S daughter! (Thus war-bled a PE-RI beneath the dark sea) No'. The page number '620' is at the bottom.

- 'The Fireworshippers' ends with the Ghebers being conquered, Hinda's lover Hafed sacrificing himself in the flames of the Gheber altar, and Hinda throwing herself into the sea. "Farewell to thee Araby's daughter" is sung by the Peri over the corpse of the drowned Hinda. It was the most widely-circulated song from Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, with settings by George Kiallmark (London, New York, Boston), as well as the Moravian-America composer J. G. Klemm (Philadelphia). The tune, 'Araby's daughter', also appears in *O'Neill's Music of Ireland*, a collection of traditional Irish tunes first published at Chicago in 1903.

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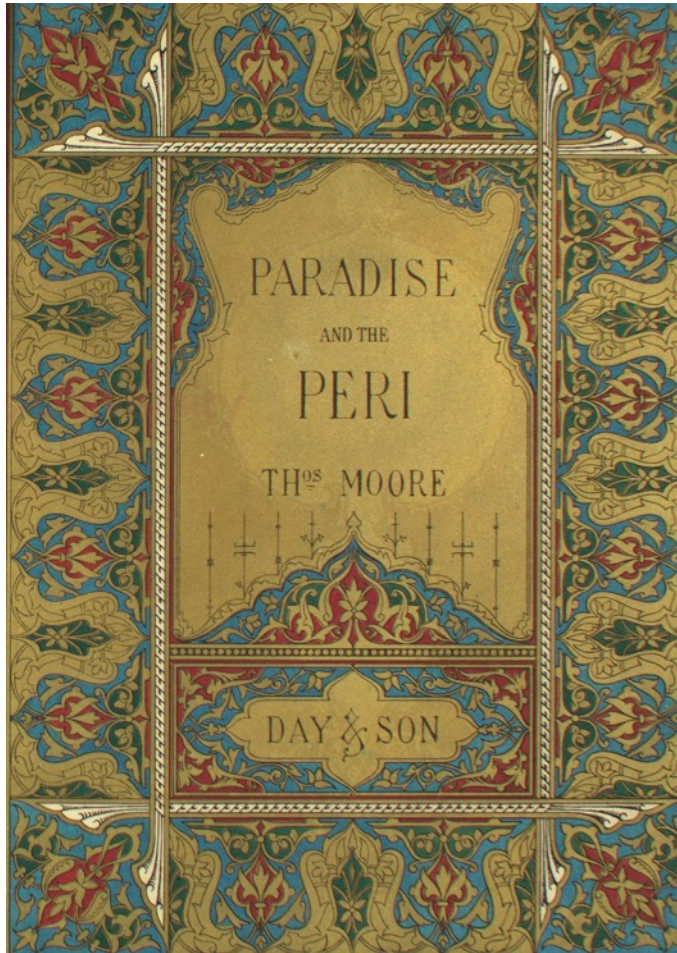
# Lalla Rookh, concert pieces

## Sections

- Lalla Rookh (Clay)
  - Das Paradies und die Peri
  - Paradise and the Peri
- From about 1840, the principal musical response to Moore's *Lalla Rookh* changes from song to larger-scale works suitable for the newly-popular choral societies. These institutions, whose activities were supported by the music publishers, facilitated a wide-spread and repeated exposure of European citizens to music inspired by Moore's poem. This phenomenon continued in a sustained way into the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



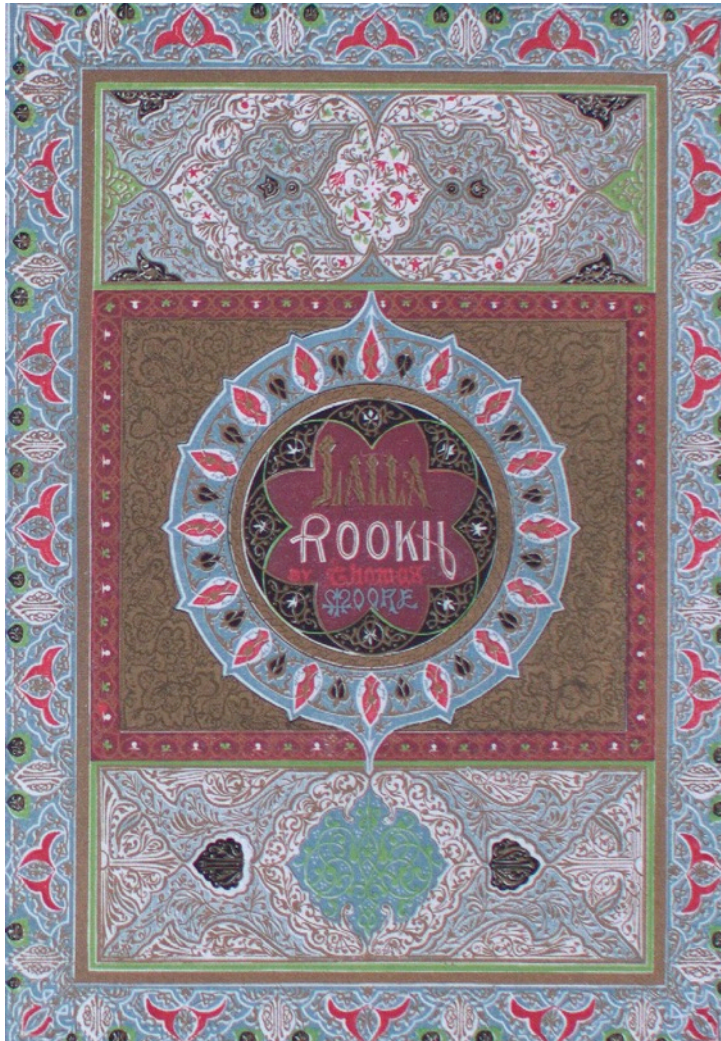
# Das Paradies und die Peri



- The first and most famous choral work set to Moore's *Lalla Rookh* was Robert Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* (Leipzig 1843). Schumann and Flechsig's text was translated into French and English, and subsequently performed in Dublin (1854), London (1856), Paris (1869), and America (from 1847).



# Paradise and the Peri



- Moore's tale of the Peri was also set by Leipzig-trained British composer John Francis Barnett, and premiered at the Birmingham Triennial Festival in 1870. Over the ensuing decade, *The Musical Times* records performances of this work at Crystal Palace; also public renditions by choral societies in South Norwood, Brixton, Frith, Retford, as well as in far-off Madras.

# Lalla Rookh, Frederic Clay



- The true love of Lalla Rookh and her poet proved a particular attraction in the Victorian period. To Moore's tale W.G. Wills' libretto for Frederic Clay's cantata adds a lovers' duet; a declaration of devotion to the princess by Vice-Chamberlain Fadladeen; also a named female slave, Leila, who expresses her loyalty to the princess and provides atmospheric songs ("Sleep my sultana"). Lalla Rookh is depicted as bored and unfulfilled ("Still this golden lull forever"). Clay's cantata premiered at the Brighton Festival in 1877. Feramorz's beguiling song, "I'll sing thee songs of Araby" was an immediate hit; several 20<sup>th</sup>-century recordings may be found on You Tube.